

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15
CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06
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R 051338Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY ANTANANARIVO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9552
INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS
AMEMBASSY VICTORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANTANANARIVO 1434

E.O. 11652:GDS
TAGS: PGOV, MA
SUBJECT: PRELIMINARY COMMENTS ON NEW GOVERNMENT

REFS: (A) ANTANANARIVO 1435 (NOTAL); (B) -NTANANARIVO 1390
& 1386 (NOTAL)

1. NEW GOVERNMENT REFLECTS ONLY MINOR RESHUFFLE. OF THE FIVE MINISTERS OF THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT NOT RETAINED, ONLY ONE WAS APPARENTLY EXPELLED FOR CAUSE, THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION BECAUSE OF THE MESS IN EDUCATION. TWO OF THE OTHER FOUR NON-REPEATERS WERE THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE, AILING BUT MAINTAINED ON SUPREME REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL (SRC), AND THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND IDEOLOGICAL ORIENTATION, WHO IS NOW PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. THE LAST TWO NOT TO BE RETAINED WERE MONIMA MEMBERS, THE MINISTER OF ART AND REVOLUTIONARY CULTURE, WHO RESIGNED LAST JUNE, AND THE MINISTER OF LABOR AND CIVIL SERVICE, WHO STAYED ON TO THE END OF HIS MANDATE, DESPITE THE MONIMA PULLOUT.

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2. AMONG THE JOB CHANGERS WAS THE PREVIOUS FOREIGN MINISTER WHO IS NOW MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND WAS REPLACED BY THE FORMER MINISTER OF YOUTH AND SPORTS. THIS IS A WELCOME CHANGE, FOR THE FORMER FM WAS INACCESSIBLE, STIFF, HYPERSENSITIVE, AND DIFFICULT. THE PRESENT MINISTER WOULD SEEM TO BE AN IMPROVEMENT, JUDGING FROM MY RECENT CALL ON HIM IN THE COMPANY OF SOME VISITING AMERICAN

BASKETBALL PAYERS. ON THE OTHER HAND I AM SORRY TO SEE AMPY PORTOS MAINTAINED AS MINISTER OF INTERIOR FOR HE IS THE ONE WHO HAS BEEN ADAMANT IN REFUSING US ACCESS TO THE JAILED AMERICAN, EDMOND LAPPEMAN, OVER THE PAST TWO MONTHS.

3. ATTACHMENT OF MINISTER OF IFANCE AND PLAN TO PRESIDENCY WAS EXPLAINED ON AUGUST 4 BY RATSIRAKA AS REFLECTING THE IMPORTANCE ATTACHED TO ELABORATION OF A DEVELOPMENT PLAN.

4. BY HIS WORDS, DURING THIS GOVERNMENT REORGANIZATION (REF B), PRESIDENT RATSIRAKA HAS SHOWN CONCERN FOR NATIONAL UNITY, DEFENDING HIS COLLABORATION WITH BOURGEOIS NATIONALISTS AND APPEALING TO THE LEFTIST MONIMA TO RETURN TO THE FOLD. BY HIS ACTIONS HE HAS BROUGHT POTENTIAL RIVALS EITHER INTO THE CHAIN OF COMMAND, AS IN THE CASE OF THE PRIME MINISTER, OR INTO THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT, THE SRC, IN THE CASE OF THE FORMER PM AND THE RADICAL LEFTIST LEADER MANANDAFY. HIS ATTACHMENT OF THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND PLAN TO THE PRESIDENCY GIVES HIM INCREASED CONTROL OVER A VITAL SECTOR OF THE GOVERNMENT AND OVER ONE OF THE LEAST RADICALLY INCLINED OF HIS MINISTERS.

5. NOW THAT ALL THE NEW INSTITUTIONS ARE IN PLACE, THE RATSIRAKA REGIME WILL ALL THE MORE BE JUDGED BY PERFORMANCE, CONFIDENTIAL

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PARTICULARLY IN THE FIELDS OF EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATION, MANAGEMENT OF THE PRESENT ECONOMY, AND FUTURE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. BARRETT

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